



Arthur Fletcher

Arthur A. Fletcher refused to allow his high school picture and those of the other African American students in his class to appear at the back of the school yearbook. He organized his first civil rights protest at the Junction City Junior/Senior High School in 1943. Fletcher has continued to fight for civil rights by devising and implementing strategies to move America's social culture to one of inclusion. He served two U.S. presidents, in government positions at all levels, and as head of nonprofit organizations and was the highest-ranking African American official in the Nixon administration.

Born in Phoenix, Arizona, in 1924, Fletcher and his family moved frequently until Fletcher graduated from high school in Junction City, Kansas. Fletcher graduated from Washburn University, Topeka, with a degree in political science and sociology. Football was Fletcher's sport and he excelled in it at Washburn before joining the Los Angeles Rams team in 1950. He played next for the Baltimore Colts as their first African American team member. Following a short stint on a Canadian football team, Fletcher gave up the sport and turned his attention to social changes he wanted to make.

Fletcher's political career began in Kansas where he worked on Fred Hall's campaign for governor in 1954. His first position in state government was with the Kansas Highway Commission. By learning how government contracts were awarded, Fletcher encouraged African American business to compete for those contracts.

In 1969, President Nixon appointed Fletcher to the post of assistant secretary of wage and labor standards in the Department of Labor. Here he developed and administered the "Philadelphia Plan" to enforce equal employment and business opportunity for minority businesses pursuing government-funded contracts. Fletcher believed that without economic security all of the social gains made by African Americans would be meaningless. Later Fletcher was appointed by President Gerald Ford to be his deputy of Urban Affairs advisor. Here Fletcher became known as the father of the Affirmative Action Enforcement Movement.

Following his career with the federal government, in 1972 Fletcher took the position of executive director of the United Negro College Fund and helped coin the phrase "a mind is a terrible thing to waste."

Arthur Fletcher currently heads Fletcher's Learning Systems, a business that creates, produces, and markets books, training manuals, and audio and video tape training products to help companies comply with the governmental statutes, laws, and guidelines for equal business

opportunities for all minorities. He has spent his entire life working toward equal economic opportunity.

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